U.S. Application No. 09/829,597
Request for Reconsideration, dated July 8, 2005
Reply to Office Action of April 8, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants thank the Examiner for his careful review of this application. Claims 1-48 have been rejected. Claims 1, 3-9, 11-17, 19-33, 35-41, 43-48 remain pending. Claims 2, 10, 18, 34, and 42 have been cancelled. Claim numberings have been re-arranged. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw claim objections for claims 29, 43, and 44. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application in view of the pending claims and the following remarks submitted in support thereof.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103:

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-6, 11-17, 19-22, 26-33, 35-38, and 43-48 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cohen et al. (US Pat. 6,507,845 B1) (Cohen) in view of U.S. Patent 6,426,761 B1 to Kanevsky et al. (Kavensky). The rejection is respectfully traversed. The teachings of Cohen do not teach each element of independent claim 1 of the currently claimed invention. Independent claim 1 defines a method for accessing related items. The method involves composing a list of the related items wherein the related items are defined as objects or users. The method further involves identifying related items based on the relationship existing between the users, the users and the objects, and the objects. Then, a related item is selected from the composed list.

Cohen teaches a method for improving collaborative working among a group of people working together on a project or task involving a defined set of documents. In Cohen, the task is the project that a team is involved in. The method in Cohen provides a method to improve awareness of a status of a task by storing a first set of data representing a plurality of users involved in the task and a second set of data representing a plurality of data objects. According to Cohen, the plurality of users are the individuals that make up the team and the

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data objects are the documents or files involved in the task. The method in Cohen provides

the individual user a way to get an update of the progress of the task by displaying the

activity data in two separate windows or regions simultaneously. A first region contains a list

of the plurality of users in association with an activity performed by each of the users

concurrently or most recently. The second region contains a list of the plurality of data

objects in association with an activity performed upon each of the plurality of data objects

concurrently or most recently. Thus two windows provide a comprehensive awareness of the

current or most recent activities performed by the users in the team as well as the current or

most recent activity performed upon each of the documents involved in the project or task

(Column 3, lines 26-37). In other words, the individuals involved in the project can get an

update of the work done by the other individuals involved in the project and can access the

files that need to be worked on. Furthermore, in Cohen, the clients further have a set of

collaboration software tools, which interface with the applications and tool bar to allow users

to select other users and documents in the displayed tool bars and to initiate collaborative

work with other users or manipulation of documents (column 5 lines 11-15).

In contrast, the claimed invention provides any user access to related objects and

wherein these related objects are determined using a metric, which depends on different

variables. The related objects are not restricted to a particular task and to particular users.

The Examiner asserts that Cohen uses a metric system to define related items. Applicants

respectfully traverses the Examiner's characterization in this regard because the portion of the

reference relied upon by the Examiner (FIG. 3, Column 3, lines 1-5 and Column 6, lines 6-9)

does not disclose the use of a metric to identify the related items. In fact, the method

involves the step of storing a first of set of data representing a plurality of users involved in

the task and a second set of data representing a plurality of data objects. Moreover, the two

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sets of data representing users and data objects may be generated by one of the users by selecting a group of users from among a larger group (column 3, lines 4-6), i.e. selecting the few that are involved in a particular project. Therefore, the data that are being stored are pre-selected by one of the users. Cohen essentially brings together the people working as a team on a project. The stored data helps to achieve the smooth flow of a particular project.

In addition, in Cohen, the user establishes the tasks by creating a task object and associating it with a select number of documents involved in the task and a select number of users to be allocated to the task. The number of users to be allocated to a task is not the same as the metric taught in the claimed invention, as asserted by the Examiner. What Cohen is teaching is that the number of people and the documents needed to complete a task is predefined so that the people who are assigned to the tasks can keep track of the status of the tasks and collaborate with one another to work effectively. In the claimed invention, the number of users and the objects are all dynamic, are not predefined, and are not directed to a particular task as in Cohen. As such, in the claimed invention, there is no need for collaboration tools to interface with the applications and tool bar to allow users to select other users and documents in the displayed tool bars.

The Examiner acknowledges that Cohen fails to teach composing a list of one or more related items and selecting the related item from said list. The Examiner then cites Kavensky asserting that it would have been obvious to modify the method in Cohen by including the method described in Kavensky

For the claimed invention to be obvious in view of the combination of prior art, the prior art must suggest the desirability and obviousness of making the combination proposed by the Examiner. Kavensky provides a method and apparatus for generating GUIs for a variety of "desktop" and web browser applications that implements fractal geometries for

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organizing items such as icons, windows, pull down menus, text and any other graphically represented information (Column 3, lines 39-43). As can be seen, Kavensky is limited to applications that implements fractal geometries. Moreover, according to Kavensky, the system of the invention organizes icons, web links, text, etc. presented on GUI so that related or relevant information is presented in a useful manner. Kavensky basically shows a way of presenting information on a computer terminal or a display monitor.

Unlike Kavensky, the claimed invention teaches a method of accessing related items is provided. The method includes composing a list of one or more related items defined by a metric. A user is presented with the list of related items so that the user can select from the list provided. As described above, Kavenski is not teaching the claimed invention instead Kavenski teaches to combine related objects presented on a GUI.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the reference or in the knowledge generally available, to one having ordinary skill in the art, to combine the references. Additionally, the references when combined must teach or suggest all the claim features. As discussed above, Cohen does not disclose or suggest composing a list of one or more related items i.e. users or objects, based on a relationship between the users, the users and the objects, and two objects defined by a metric. There is nothing in Kavensky that would have cured any of the deficiencies pointed out above with respect to Cohen. Therefore, even if it is deemed that there would have been a proper motivation to combine the references, a proposition with which Applicants disagree, the resulting combination would not include all the claimed features of the independent claims of the claimed invention.

Accordingly, for at least the above-stated reasons, Applicants submit that independent claims 1, 17, and 33 are patentable under 35. U.S.C § 103, at least for the above-stated

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reasons. Furthermore, dependent claims 3-6, 11-16, 19-22, 26-32, 35-38, and 43-48, each of which directly or indirectly depends from amended independent claims 1, 17 and 33 are submitted to be patentable under 35.U.S.C § 102 (e) over Cohen for the reasons set forth above. As a result, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the 35.U.S.C § 102 (e) rejections.
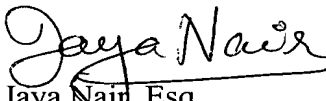
Claims 7-9, 23-25, 39-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Cohen and Kavensky and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,678,882 B1 to Hurley et al (Hurley). Hurley teaches a collaboration model for collaborative applications. There is nothing in Hurley that would have cured any of the deficiencies pointed out above with respect to Cohen and Kavensky. Accordingly, for at least the above-stated reasons, Applicants submit that dependent claims 1, 17, and 33 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the combination of Cohen , Kavensky and Hurley. Claims 7-9, 23-25, 39-41 which ultimately depend from the independent claims 1,17, and 33, are likewise patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over this combination for at least the same reasons set forth with respect to independent claim 1

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that all the pending claims 1, 3-9, 11-17, 19-33, 35-41, 43-48 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions concerning the present Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at

(408) 774-6926. If any additional fees are due in connection with the filing of this Amendment, the Commissioner is also authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-0805 (Order No. SUNMP406). A duplicate copy of the transmittal is enclosed for this purpose.

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